United Nations S/2015/276

Security Council

Distr.: General
29 April 2015
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 23 April 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the fourteenth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) (S/2015/264):

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms the detailed positions that it had previously brought to the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council in identical letters responding to the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014). It also wishes to emphasize the following points.

1. Over a full year has passed since the Secretary-General began issuing monthly reports on humanitarian work in Syria. During that time, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has regularly provided documented information to the Secretariat and the Security Council. The Syrian Government therefore finds it deplorable that the report's authors have continued to politicize the issue, ignoring and indeed obscuring the facts and developments on the ground. The authors have used and re-used the same stereotypical language, with a view to blaming the Syrian Government for the deterioration of the humanitarian situation and for impeding the delivery of assistance. At the same time, as in paragraphs 41, 48 and 57, they refer to the terrorist groups obliquely in order to avoid holding them responsible for their crimes.

2. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic also finds it deplorable that the authors have depended on sources whose lack of credibility has been demonstrated by the facts on the ground. They have turned a blind eye to the basic fact that the humanitarian crisis that has arisen in Syria was caused, exacerbated and prolonged for over four years by the acts of terrorism that armed terrorist groups have committed against the people and Government of Syria.

3. Syria regrets that certain actors within the Secretariat, along with certain Member States, persist in falsifying the facts and misleading international opinion regarding the causes of the Syrian crisis. That crisis would not have lasted without the funding, training and backing provided by certain States to such armed terrorist groups as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Nusrah Front, the Free

Army, the Army of Islam, the Islamic Front, the Levant Front and other organizations associated with or that are branches of those groups or the Al-Qaida terrorist organization. Nor would the crisis have lasted if foreign powers had not embraced the terrorist groups and covered up their war crimes against the Syrian people and their property and resources. Annex I sets out some of the crimes committed by ISIL, the Nusrah Front, the Free Army, the Army of Islam and other armed terrorist groups.

4. The groups have persisted with their bloodthirsty methods, acting with the approval and blessing of regimes in the region that are well known for their policies of ethnic cleansing, hangings, preaching ignorance, imprisonment, repression, decapitations and beatings of proponents of free speech. In their thousands, terrorists belonging to the Nusrah Front and other terrorist organizations have attacked numerous Syrian towns. They have entered the country from Jordan in the south, heading for the town of Busra al-Sham and its surroundings. They have come from Turkey in the north-west, heading into Idlib governorate. They have raided peaceful areas and committed the most heinous crimes against civilians, forcibly displacing tens of thousands of people, mostly women, children and the elderly.

5. The armed terrorist groups have also systematically targeted Palestine refugees in Syria, attacking Palestinian camps in the north and south of Syria. Over two years ago, the terrorists overran and occupied Yarmouk camp in Damascus, imposing a siege from within. They declared open season on the lives and property of the inhabitants. As a result, 128,000 Palestinian and Syrian civilian inhabitants were displaced. The terrorists prevented the aid from reaching those who stayed behind. In early April, on instructions from certain specific States, the terrorist Nusrah Front allowed ISIL terrorists to infiltrate the camp, causing the humanitarian situation to deteriorate. In cooperation with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) and other international organizations, the Syrian Government responded immediately to the crisis by granting free passage to civilians who wished to leave, and by providing shelter and humanitarian assistance to a total of 2,150 families to date.

6. Syria is therefore surprised at the recent outcry regarding events in the camp. Despite the grave nature of the events, the parties within the United Nations and the international community that are now crying over the camp did not react when the terrorist groups attacked the Palestinian camps, which are spread across Syria from the north to the south. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic strongly rejects the Secretary-General's repeated and mistaken assertion that the Palestine refugees in the camp are caught between the Syrian armed forces and ISIL. That statement deliberately ignores the Syrian Government's efforts, which are described above, to facilitate the evacuation of a large number of the camp's inhabitants and to provide assistance. The Syrian Government calls on the United Nations and the Security Council swiftly to prevail on Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Israel and Jordan to cease funding, sponsoring and supporting the terrorist groups and to press for the terrorists to withdraw from Yarmouk in order to safeguard the lives and security of the civilians left in the camp. Those actors should encourage efforts to reach a reconciliation agreement, and should support the work of the Government and of UNRWA — which is responsible for providing assistance to Palestine refugees — so that both can continue their joint endeavour to deliver humanitarian assistance and relief to the camp's inhabitants.

7. In the context of its responsibilities as a protecting State, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has facilitated the delivery of assistance to all Syrian civilians and those who enjoy the same rights. On 9 April 2015, the Government agreed to most of the requests made by the United Nations and other international organizations to deliver humanitarian assistance to hotspots in Irbin, Zamalka, Babila, Yalda, Bayt Saham and Bludan in Rif Dimashq governorate; Kafr Hamra, Ma'arrat al-Artiq, Urum, Nubul, Zahra', Afrin, Safirah and Aleppo city in Aleppo governorate; Talbisah, Kafr Nan and Dayr Ful in Homs governorate; and Ariha and Jisr al-Shughur in Idlib governorate. The Government is currently examining other requests, taking into consideration the need to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian workers, the security situation on the ground and the equitable distribution of humanitarian assistance and its successful delivery to civilians. The Syrian Government is surprised at the double standards of the United Nations, which insists on delivering aid to specific areas, while claiming to be unable to deliver to similar areas with a comparable security situation.

8. Although the Syrian Government gave its approval to the United Nations side on 9 April 2015, the United Nations entities operating in Syria had not dispatched any humanitarian assistance convoy to any of the agreed hotspots as of 24 April 2015.

9. The Syrian Government recognizes the important work done by the United Nations and its specialized agencies. It wishes to reaffirm the plain fact that such work would not be possible without its efforts, its constructive cooperation and its considerable role in facilitating the process. Syria reiterates that it is the party most committed to the Syrian people and to the Palestine refugees, who are guests in Syria. Despite the unilateral coercive measures imposed illegally on the Syrian people, and despite the illegal and unethical financial and economic obstacles placed in the path of Syria and its people by certain States, particularly Western and neighbouring States, the Government has continued to provide the greatest share of humanitarian, relief, living and health needs to citizens affected by the crisis across the country, without discrimination. It is deplorable that, in paragraph 44, the authors of the report inflate the numbers of people who have benefited from cross-border assistance. Some of those areas are easily reachable from within Syria; the town of Izra' is one example among many others.

10. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes that the Turkish Government, which sponsors armed terrorism in Syria, has allowed thousands of commercial vehicles to enter Syrian territory illegally through certain crossings, of which some are illicit and others are used by United Nations cross-border convoys. Those commercial vehicles have transported terrorists, weapons and hazardous substances to armed terrorist groups in Syria, exploiting the absence of legal mechanisms to inspect the vehicles' contents. That practice is a serious violation of Security Council resolutions, particularly resolutions 2165 (2014), 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014) and 2199 (2015). In addition, it exposes United Nations convoys to multiple threats.

11. The Syrian Government will continue to cooperate with the United Nations to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to all of its citizens who have been affected by the crisis, wherever they may be, without discrimination, in accordance with the guiding principles for humanitarian emergency assistance set forth in General Assembly resolution 46/182, particularly respect for Syrian sovereignty and

territorial integrity, a principle that was underscored in Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014). Annex II lists examples of humanitarian assistance that was delivered to several hard-to-reach areas and hotspots thanks to the facilitation provided by the Syrian Government in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. It also lists assistance delivered provided by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

12. Paragraph 4 of the report confirms what the Syrian Government has long stated, namely, that the armed terrorist groups that are active under various names in certain parts of Syria either affiliated with or are branches of the terrorist organization Al-Qaida, with which they are have ideological, doctrinal or logistical connections.

13. In order to legitimize their interference in the internal affairs of Syria, certain States have persisted in supporting terrorism and concocting precedents and terminology, such as "moderate armed opposition" and "non-State armed groups", to describe terrorist groups that wreak destruction and death. Moreover, certain United Nations officials have adopted those terms. That practice flies in the face of international law. Opposition can only be political and peaceful. It must comply with laws and regulations, and must be expressed in words and by taking positions. It must build up the State and its institutions, instead of seeking to destroy them. Anyone who bears up arms must do so in accordance with the law and the regulations in force. Any endeavour to legitimize such terms is merely an attempt to attack and destroy the independence and sovereignty of States, and is a dangerous violation of international laws and conventions, particularly the Charter of the United Nations. The Organization was established to prevent certain States from dominating others; to build international peace and security; to guarantee States' equality before the law; and to ensure that their peoples, on an equal footing, can enjoy a life of dignity, exercise their rights and responsibilities and aspire to a prosperous and peaceful future.

14. It is also deplorable that Secretariat officials have included in the report abhorrent terms that convey discord, division, extremism and blind zealotry, in an effort to distort the true nature of the situation in Syria. Such expressions portray in confessional and sectarian terms what is in fact a war on terrorism and armed terrorist groups. That reading is contrary to both the facts on the ground and the values and culture of the Syrian people.

15. The Government is surprised that paragraph 36 of the report states that the United Nations continued to face challenges with visas for international staff members. That deliberate exaggeration is intended to cast in a negative light the Government's processing of applications for new visas and visa renewals for United Nations staff members. The figures show that the Syrian Government has approved over 95 per cent of the various types of application that have been submitted, and that the time frame for processing some of the other applications has not been exceeded.

16. The Syrian Government's ongoing actions stem from the constitutional and legal responsibilities incumbent upon it as a State. They are part of the response to crimes of armed groups that are backed from abroad, and their purpose is to protect Syrian citizens. It is particularly telling that the people who have been forcibly displaced from their homes head for areas that are protected by the Syrian Arab Army. The Government has a responsibility to stand up to foreign interventions that

seek to destroy the State. It is combating terrorism on behalf of the peoples of the world, defending the values of humanity, justice, freedom and equality against the evils of fundamentalism, blind zealotry and corrosive, obscurantist ideology.

17. Syria continues to emphasize its readiness to cooperate at the international and regional level through an international or regional alliance that would be established under the auspices of the United Nations. It is also prepared to engage in bilateral counter-terrorism cooperation and supports any international effort aimed at countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, provided that, in doing so, every effort is made to safeguard civilian lives, respect national sovereignty and adhere to international instruments.

18. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its position that the crisis in Syria requires a peaceful, political solution based on dialogue among Syrians under Syrian leadership. Such dialogue must take place freely and without foreign interference. The Government calls on the international community to support the consensus towards a political solution that was reached in the negotiations held recently in Moscow.

19. The Government calls on State sponsors of terrorism and armed terrorist groups, particularly Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, France and the United States of America immediately to stop supporting, funding, training and harbouring such groups. The terrorists are not a danger to Syria alone: their blind rage will spread like wildfire across the world.

20. The Government stresses that the United Nations and the Security Council must take measures to prevent certain States and regimes from sponsoring terrorism and thus violating Security Council resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014) and 2199 (2015). By refraining from taking such measures, the Security Council is sending a message to the terrorist groups and their State sponsors that they can continue to threaten and undermine international peace and security.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex I

Crimes committed by ISIL, the Nusrah Front, the Free Army, the Army of Islam and other armed terrorist groups

- On 1 March 2015, the terrorist Nusrah Front organization detonated a pickup truck near the Zu'bi petrol station in Tafas, killing or injuring over 25 civilians.
- On 3 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired missiles at the town of Sayyidah Zaynab in Rif Dimashq, killing a girl and injuring five people.
- On 3 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired shells and gas cylinders at the Talal, Bab al-Faraj, Salahuldin and Jam'iyyat al-Zahra' quarters in Aleppo governorate, killing nine civilians and injuring 12 others.
- On 3 March 2015, armed terrorist groups detonated a tunnel near the orphanage in Aleppo city.
- On 3 March 2015, armed terrorist groups abducted Ayman Rif'at al-Muhayini and his son Muhammad in Damascus.
- On 3 March 2015, armed terrorist groups bombed the pipeline running from the Sha'ir oilfield to the Ebla refinery in Furqlus, Homs governorate, causing material damage.
- On 5 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired a shell at the water resources building in Harasta, Rif Dimashq governorate, causing material damage.
- On 5 March 2015, armed terrorist groups blew up the Conoco pipeline running from the Dayr al-Zawr refinery to the natural gas distribution station of Rayyan, Homs governorate.
- On 5 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired eight missiles at the town of Qarfa, Dar'a governorate, killing one adult and two children.
- On 6 March 2015, in Bayt Saham, Rif Dimashq governorate, armed terrorist groups belonging to the terrorist Nusrah Front opened fire on worshippers who were leaving the local mosque, injuring several people.
- On 6 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired shells and gas cylinders at the quarters of Sharafiyah, Sulayman al-Halabi and Halab al-Jadidah, killing one person and injuring nine others.
- On 7 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired shells and home-made rockets at the village of Durin, in Ladhiqiyah governorate, injuring three civilians.
- On 7 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired shells and home-made rockets at the Khalidiyah and Jamiliyah areas of Aleppo city, killing a woman and injuring seven people, including children.
- On 8 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired missiles at the Mazzah and Mazzah 86 areas of Damascus city, injuring three civilians.
- On 8 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired a missile at the Damascus governorate building, causing only material damage.

- On 8 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired missiles at the town of Jaramana, in Rif Dimashq, injuring three civilians.
- On 9 March 2015, on the Salamiyah-Raqqah road in Hama governorate, armed terrorist groups opened fire on a Saba car driven by a civilian, Tawfiq Ilbi, who was travelling with his wife and two children. Mr. Ilbi was killed and his wife and children were taken to an unknown location.
- On 10 March 2015, armed terrorist groups abducted a civilian on the Damascus-Kiswah highway near the town of Muqaylabiyah, in Rif Dimashq.
- On 11 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired a missile that landed on the Byblos Bank in Damascus city, causing material damage.
- On 11 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired shells and home-made rockets at the town of Izra', in Dar'a governorate, injuring a woman and two children.
- On 12 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired shells and gas cylinders at the quarters of Salahuldin, Jabiriyah, Maysalun and Hamidiyah, killing two civilians and injuring 29 others.
- On 20 March 2015, armed terrorist groups in Yarmouk camp opened sniper fire on the food parcel distribution point near the Palestinian Arab Club, killing one woman.
- On 20 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired some 405 shells, gas cylinders and home-made rockets at Idlib city, injuring nine civilians.
- On 20 March 2015, during the Nowruz celebrations in Hasakah city, armed terrorist groups detonated a car on Shuhada' square, and a suicide bomber blew himself up in a car near the Mufti quarter, killing 68 civilians and injuring 188 others.
- On 21 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired shells and missiles at Izra', Dar'a governorate. One woman sustained shrapnel wounds.
- On 22 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired some 504 shells, gas cylinders and home-made rockets at Idlib city, killing two civilian men, two women and a child, and injuring 17 civilians.
- On 22 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired mortars and gas cylinders at the quarters of Sayf al-Dawlah, Jamiliyah and Salahuldin, in Aleppo city, killing five civilians and injuring 10 others, including a woman and a child.
- On 23 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired some 774 shells, gas cylinders and home-made rockets at Idlib city, killing a civilian and injuring 11 others, including women and children.
- On 23 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired shells and gas cylinders at Aleppo city, killing 20 civilians and injuring 49 others, including women and children.
- On 24 March 2015, armed terrorist groups in large numbers attacked the surroundings of Idlib city, while terrorists fired some 900 mortars and gas cylinders, killing 18 civilians and injuring 90 others.
- On 24 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired shells and gas cylinders at the Ghazi Ayyash and Qusur quarters of Dayr al-Zawr, injuring nine civilians.

- On 27 March 2015, armed terrorist groups opened fire and sniper fire on the quarters of Muhafazah, Maysalun, Salahuldin and Khalidiyah, killing a child and injuring four civilians.
- On 27 March 2015, a suicide bomber detonated a car bomb in the Mushayrafah quarter of Hasakah town, killing three civilians and injuring several others.
- On 30 March 2015, armed terrorist groups in the town of Tall abducted Diyab Ahmad Basha and took him to an unknown location.
- On 30 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired shells and gas cylinders at Masakin al-Sabil, the Shayhan roundabout and Tishrin Street in Aleppo city, injuring six civilians.
- On 31 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired a shell at the Duwayli'ah area of Damascus, killing a civilian and injuring 13 others.
- On Tuesday 31 March 2015, armed terrorist groups launched a barbaric attack on the village of Mab'ujah, in the Salamiyah countryside, senselessly the massacring defenceless civilian inhabitants. Over 60 civilians, most of whom were women and children, were shot or had their throats cut, and dozens of others were seriously injured.
- On 31 March 2015, armed terrorist groups fired shells and gas cylinders at the quarters of Jam'iyyat al-Zahra', Khalidiyah, Sayyid Ali, Sharafiyah, A'zamiyah and the College of Agriculture in Aleppo city, killing one woman and injuring 14 other people.

Annex II

Examples of humanitarian assistance that the United Nations and international organizations, acting in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, were able to deliver thanks to the facilitation of the Syrian Government, and assistance that was provided by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent

- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid (food and non food aid and medical assistance), provided from inside Syrian territory by United Nations organizations, to various governorates, including Hasakah, Aleppo, Dar'a, Idlib and Hama, but not to Raqqah and Dayr al-Zawr governorates. A total of 277,398 food parcels were delivered, including 48,814 parcels to Hama and its countryside, 74,028 parcels to Rif Dimashq, 23,914 parcels to Dar'a and its countryside, and 52,750 parcels to Aleppo and its countryside.

- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross from inside Syrian territory to most governorates, including Rif Dimashq, Hama and Dar'a. A total of 72,365 food parcels were distributed. In addition, 41,685 food parcels were distributed in bulk in Aleppo, Damascus and Rif Dimashq governorates. The Syrian Arab Red Crescent also delivered 22,234 food parcels provided by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to Rif Dimashq, Damascus, Homs, Aleppo and Hama governorates.

- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid (food and non-food aid and medical assistance) provided by foreign non governmental organizations operating in Syria to Aleppo, Rif Dimashq, Damascus and Homs governorates. A total of 11,554 food parcels were distributed. That number is in addition to the health-care parcels that were distributed in many governorates, including Aleppo, Hama, Damascus, Homs and Suwayda'.

- Some 1,886,205 Syrian beneficiaries (377,241 families) received food parcels provided by the United Nations through the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. On the other hand, some 1,799,671 Syrian beneficiaries (359,935 families) received food parcels provided by the United Nations through non governmental organizations. The total number of the beneficiaries of such assistance inside Syrian territory thus stands at 3,685,876.

- In paragraph 44 of the report, it is noted that 1.9 million persons received food aid. That figure is grossly exaggerated and is meant to cover up the ineffectiveness of the cross-border delivery of assistance. In fact, according to the sparse information provided by the United Nations, some 414,124 persons (approximately 82,825 families) received food aid in March.

- In March, some 4,803 food parcels and health packages were delivered to the Yarmouk camp and 53 ill persons were treated at the medical point in the camp. From 30 December 2014 to the end of March 2015, despite constant sniping by armed terrorist groups at humanitarian teams, more than 61,882 food parcels and more than 11,168 medical parcels were delivered. In addition, more than 4,856 ill persons were evacuated from the camp in order to receive the necessary treatment.

- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent responded to the emergency needs of some 2,150 families in Yalda, Babila and Bayt Saham that had fled the Yarmouk camp at the beginning of April after it had been overrun by ISIL. Those families were given humanitarian assistance (food and non food aid and health-care supplies) provided by the United Nations and other international organization, such as UNRWA.
- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent responded to the emergency needs of thousands of families in Ariha and Jisr al-Shughur in the Idlib countryside that had fled Idlib city at the end of March after it had been overrun by the Nusrah Front and its terrorist partners. Those families were given humanitarian assistance (food and non food aid and health-care supplies) provided by the United Nations and other international organization.
- The World Health Organization was able to deliver medical assistance and provide medical treatment to 3.4 million persons.
- The Syrian Government renewed its approval for the World Food Programme to bring humanitarian assistance through the Nusaybin crossing on the Syrian-Turkish border, in order to allow 46,000 food parcels to be brought into Hasakah governorate in March 2015.